

# BEAR-HUMAN INTERACTIONS

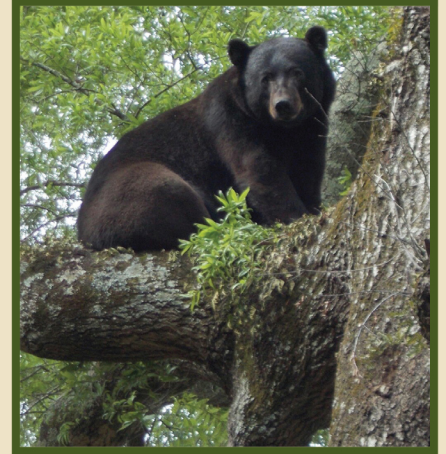
## COMMON BLACK BEAR BEHAVIORS



Black bears are naturally curious and will often inspect objects. They may stand up on their hind legs to investigate a smell or noise, or to get a better vantage point. This is not a display of aggressive behavior, but rather an attempt to interpret their surroundings.



Black bears are exceptional climbers, and due to their desire to avoid conflict, bears may often climb trees to escape to a location where the bear feels safe. Bears may also climb trees, deer stands, or other structures out of curiosity.



Black bears have a unique communication system that involves both vocalizations and body posture. When agitated or nervous, bears may “pop” their jaws, blow or huff heavily, and/or swat the ground or a tree. These behaviors are the bear’s method of communicating that you are too close, not signs of aggression or imminent attack. Do not run; instead, slowly back away, increasing the distance between yourself and the bear.



A mother with cubs will typically react to a disturbance in one of two ways: 1.) the mother will encourage the cubs to climb a tree while she remains at the base of that tree, or 2.) she and the cubs will run a short distance to get away from the area. In either case, one should calmly remove oneself from the situation.

## WHEN INTERACTING WITH A BEAR

*Flattened ears, raised hairs on the back of the neck, and a low, staring gaze could indicate that the bear is considering charging.*

**If a bear persistently follows you or approaches you:**

- Turn and face the bear.
- Raise your arms over your head to make yourself appear larger.
- If the bear gets closer, talk loudly or shout at it.
- Maintain an aggressive demeanor to attempt to intimidate the bear.
- Act together as a group if you have companions.
- Throw non-food objects such as rocks at the bear.
- Use a deterrent such as a stout stick.
- Don’t run and don’t turn away from the bear.
- Don’t leave food for the bear; this encourages further problems.
- Leave the area as soon as the bear leaves.



There has **NEVER** been a recorded case of a black bear attacking a human in Louisiana. In the improbable event that a bear does charge or attack, people are encouraged to not run away or “play dead,” but instead to fight back and display dominance.